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Ave Maria

Francis Browning
D. Bickerstaffe-
Drew (count.)



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A V E M A R I A ;

OR,

Catesby's Story.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

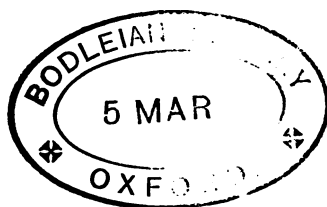
BY

REV. FRANCIS DREW.



R. WASHBOURNE,
18 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.
1882.

251. g. 632.



To
OUR MOST SWEET MOTHER,
OUR GREAT LADY,
Mary, the Mother of Jesus,
WITH ALL LOVE AND ALL THANKSGIVING.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

1. OREMUS.
 2. DOMINUS VOBISCUM.
 3. PATER NOSTER.
 4. PER JESUM CHRISTUM.
 5. VENI CREATOR.
 6. CREDO.
 7. AVE MARIA.
 8. ORA PRO NOBIS.
 9. CORPUS CHRISTI.
 10. DEI GENITRIX.
 11. REQUIEM.
 12. MISERERE.
 13. DEO GRATIAS.
 14. ANGELUS DOMINI.
-

R. WASHBOURNE, 18 PATERNOSTER ROW,
LONDON.



AVE MARIA; OR, CATESBY'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE Lord Catesby felt very lonely when his tutor left him.*
For two years the young man and the child had been together, and by little and little they had grown very fond of each other.

Justin had been very good to the boy, and in his odd, unaffectionate manner, Catesby had shown that he liked his tutor.

Not only had these two been, as I said, almost continually together during two whole years, but they had been together alone: strangers were rarely seen at Hilgrave, and the rest of the household did not come across their path much. You remember that it con-

* Though each of the little Books of St. Nicholas is complete in itself this one is to some extent a sequel to 'Credo.'

sisted only of Catesby's grandfather and grandmother, invalids and childless mourners who seldom left their own rooms, and whose world was peopled mostly with the dead.

To the boy and his young tutor that life seemed very desolate and dreary that was lived, in the faded rooms of the west wing, by the old man and his wife—as indeed it was. Even the sunlight in the spring evenings seemed to fall sadly on those deserted rooms, silent now, which had echoed in the old days to children's shouts and merry laughter; and when in winter-time the rains fell from low-brooding clouds on the walks and flower-plots of the parterre without those western windows, it was as though they were softly weeping, joining their lamentation to the sorrowful sighings of that lonely pair.

Do not think, my dear children, that the old country gentleman and his wife were dark and gloomy-minded grumblers against the great will of God. It was not so—with holy patience and meekness they bore what He had laid upon them, and knew that it was best; but it was a very bitter sorrow that had come to them in the late winter of their life, and they had no longer the strength and vigour of youth which can shake off its sorrows and begin life all anew, which can plant fresh flowers in place of those that have been rooted up, and walk manfully onward, sure of many a joy to come, for all some gladness has been quenched and lost.

It is very bitter to young children to lose their fellows, and more bitter to lose those who gave them life ; but oh, indeed it is most sad when those who looked to have had their eyes closed by the children they have brought into God's world are left behind without them, when the old live on, and the young are cut away in the midst of happy days—that is most sad of all. And so it was with them. Son and daughter both were gone, and nothing was left of either but the little boy, himself desolate and alone, that the daughter had left behind.

So it was that from that western wing, silent and faded, there fell upon the house a shadow and a sense of chill ; but in a little while the boy and the young man had grown used to it, and in a manner forgot the other life that was being lived there ; so that they read or walked, rode, skated or shot rabbits, without much practical remembrance of any other occupants of the Manor ; and thus, now Justin was gone, and he was left alone, Catesby felt desolate enough. As the dog-cart in which he had taken Mr. Cholmely to Marlsford Station carried him homeward all alone, he sat silent and sad, gazing out dreamily across the waste.

It was such an afternoon as when Justin had come to Hilgrave. A little bitter wind was plaining in the woods, and teased the small, chill lakes that cowered down in the hollows of the waste ; there their reedy fringes rustled and made weird whisperings, mysterious and low.

Down on the horizon banks of sullen clouds reared themselves up, trying to shut out even that dun sky. On naked oak-boughs sat the birds, sad, voiceless, and chill at heart, wondering why the spring should lag so long. St. Valentine's Day was past, but they kept dreary honeymoon; and the deer upon the waste lay huddled close for warmth and cheer, limping heedlessly away when roused by sounds of carriage-wheels upon the road.

Before night the wind would be wild and high, but yet it would not rain. Yonder clouds, like sullen, sorrowing eyes, hopeless and careless, would not weep, would not pour their burden to the ground.

And now they were at home. The solemn footman was more solemn than was his wont, and Catesby refused rather impatiently his offer of tea in the library at once.

'No; in an hour or so will be quite soon enough; and I shall be in the schoolroom. Will you bring it there?'

'Very good, my lord,' replied the solemn one, who, behind his solemnity and his dull, white face, had no small affection for the boy, and was very sorry for him to-day, left as he was alone.

'My lord will miss him sadly, I doubt,' he had remarked to Mrs. Bunce, on the expression of her own regret at Mr. Cholmely's going.

'Poor thing, he will indeed!' the house-keeper had answered, with large compassion. 'It'll be a good thing when he goes to school;

he might as well live in the family vaults as here, I'm sure. Mind you take him up some buttered toast for tea! and tell that Caroline to make it well, or I'll know the reason why!

'That Caroline' was the present kitchen-maid, and the present kitchen-maid was always what the fire is to the frying-pan, in respect of the last. Of Caroline Mrs. Bunce held the poorest opinion, and was fond of likening her buttered toast to sponge, and her dry to shoe-leather, on which two articles you would have imagined the housekeeper of the Manor to have chiefly dieted herself had you been guided by her admonitions of Caroline without regard of her personal appearance.

If she did subsist upon sponges and shoe-soles, I can only say they suited her; for Mrs. Bunce was the one eminently comfortable person at the Manor; in that respect far surpassing Mr. Binns, who, though equal in obesity, had an air of scornful melancholy, as though he *inwardly* despised port, and made light of the charms of sweet-breads.

CHAPTER II.



ATESBY went listlessly upstairs to his own room, and taking off his hat and coat, looked out across the darkening waste.

'It is Shakespeare reading-time,' he thought

to himself, as an old clock deliberately chimed the quarter on the corridor outside.

‘How nice all that was! I wish he could have stayed till I was old enough to go abroad.’

For Catesby had made up his mind to go sooner or later to some foreign university for a time before doing anything in the way of a profession.

‘I am quite determined *not to be nothing*,’ he said, one day, to Justin. ‘I can’t conceive how anyone can make up his mind to spend his whole life making new drains and waiting for the shooting season to begin.’

And in this the young man very keenly encouraged him: not that Catesby wanted keeping up to the mark, he was not the sort of boy to make a man without any aim in life beyond having a good time of it.

‘I wish I was not a peer,’ he had said at another time. ‘I should so much rather have got into the Lower House; the Lords are so dull, and there you have your seat waiting for you like the squire’s pew in church . . . it would be ever so much nicer having to take your chance of a seat, and do something to get it. . . . I almost wish my father had not got the attainder reversed; then I should have been able to try and get in for a borough.’

Justin laughed.

‘You are like the lady who said, “I do wish I was not a duchess—pearls are so *much* prettier than strawberry-leaves,”’ he answered,

but for all that he agreed with Catesby, and was sorry that fortune had cut out so much of his cloth for him that there was hardly any choice as to what sort of a suit he should make of it.

And so after many talks, and much building of queer castles in the air, Lord Catesby had made up his mind that when he was old enough he should go abroad to study for a year or two, and especially to learn modern languages well, which he determined was of particular importance.

You see this boy was rather old-fashioned; '*that hodd*,' as Mrs. Bunce declared, 'you might as well talk to a diction'ry, like.'

But just at present he did not feel particularly inclined to talk to anybody, and would have preached no lecture on the motions of the stars and the laws of gravitation to the astounded Mrs. Bunce, even had she been present and striven to draw him out, as was her wont, by loudly expressed wonder or brazen unbelief. He was looking across the gardens to the waste without seeing anything, or hearing anything except his own unexpressed regrets and wishes.

'Well, I hope he will get on well,' the boy thought heartily; 'and he promised to come here at the holidays and take me with him to Oxford. . . . I should like to live in a place like that; it seems to me that there's not much fun in living in manors, and places of that sort, unless you have a lot of brothers

and sisters, or, at all events, brothers—I am not so sure about the sisters—and there are plenty of things to do and books to read. How awful it must be not to care about reading! . . . Fancy being shut up here if one hated books! What *would* one do? Go and loaf about the stables, I suppose, and talk to the grooms while they rub down the horses, only then they would have to stop hissing, and I'm quite certain neither Ben nor Evans could do anything at all if they were not hissing. . . . I think I will go and read now . . . "Through the Looking Glass," or something. . . . I hope there's a good fire in the schoolroom.'

So Catesby turned away from the window, and crossed his own room into the school-room that opened out of it. The door into another room, by some chance, stood open, and Catesby went to shut it.

'How well I remember,' he said, with his quaint smile, that was half grim, half funny, 'the day Mr. Cholmely came, and Hicks had put him into this room. . . . Phew! how it smoked! And that idiot Hicks said, "They mostly do smoke on that side, my lord." By the way, "Through the Looking Glass" is in Mr. Cholmely's room.'

And so he went to fetch it.

You know how desolate a room always looks that has been occupied until to-day, and is now dismantled. How horribly eager the housemaids are! they seem to thirst for your

departure in order to fall upon it. Then they come and work their wicked will upon it; they make the jugs stand up upon their heads in the basins, and roll lanky shrouds of newspaper round the fire-irons; the register in the grate itself they shut, lest the proper tomb-like smell should not be present; and blotting-books and ornaments are condemned to solitary confinement in the drawers nearest to their normal site: then the hearthrug is rolled up and put into the bath beneath the bed, whose valence is tucked up, and whereon the blankets are folded into square heaps with the curtains and covered with a great cold chintz shroud. . . . Perhaps you have been so unfortunate as to miss your train, the last train in the evening, and been obliged to go back whence you came out; then all this has burst upon you, and you indeed realize that you were not expected to return.

All this met the eye of Catesby when he turned the key of Mr. Cholmely's room, and stood within its gloomy shadows looking round.

It was far too dark to see anything at first but dim outlines; so he pulled up the blinds, which let in what little light remained. It was five o'clock and February was not yet run out, and all day the sun had been hidden behind solid walls of dark, low-lying clouds. The book was nowhere to be seen; it too had been laid in its long home in the wardrobe, with the ink-stand and the paper-knife and the little

letter-weight that Catesby's mother had brought back from the Exhibition of 1851.

'That dreadful Millett!' exclaimed the boy, apostrophizing the head-housemaid with a note of anything but admiration. 'I suppose I shall have to open every drawer before I shall find it.'

But luckily for his patience he began with the wardrobe, and so had not a very tiresome search: then he looked round sadly on the deserted and dismantled room, and was quite glad to shut the wardrobe up again and leave it—with all its funereal-robed furniture and naked shelves and tables—without, I am afraid, remembering to pull down the blinds again and lock the door behind him.

The schoolroom looked very cheerful by comparison. There was a glorious fire of coal and sputtering logs; the curtains were drawn across the doors and windows, and his big retriever lay dozing comfortably on the rug. By his own chair his little reading-table stood, with a silver, shaded lamp and some books and newspapers: here he sat down, and turning up the lamp, began to read.

Alice's delicious spell soon fell upon him, and laughter gleamed in the boy's dark and over-solemn eyes.

'Oh, Laddie!' he said, stooping down to stroke the old dog's ears. 'I wish you could understand; it is such waste to have no one to laugh with—eh old boy? But I suppose, even if it were translated into dog-language, you

would rather despise it. You are such an old fogey. You would say, "Oh yes; I know—a *children's* book, isn't it?" like the stupid old gentleman Mr. Cholmely met. Don't *you* miss him, too, Lad? I shall be quite sure to forget your meals, you know; I always did. You certainly will soon find out that Mr. Cholmely's gone.'

Perhaps Lad recognised the name; at any rate, he looked up and turned his big eyes solemnly on the other chair where Justin had always sat.

Catesby was quite touched.

'No; he's not there, Lad! He's gone away,' said the boy; 'he's gone away for good. It's no use your looking so wise; he has not gone to London for a week. He won't come back; he could not stand us any more: the Manor and you and I were quite too dull, so there! Now take your head away, I want to go on reading; go to sleep again, I say.' For the dog had thought that courtesy required of him that he should rise, and so he had slowly stumbled up upon his legs and was poking his cold, damp nose up Catesby's sleeve.

Quite understanding that he was dismissed, the old dog very deliberately dropped down again into his old place upon the rug, after making a short journey to Justin's chair to pay his respects to it by giving it a few formal sniffs, as though to show Catesby that he had grounds for his opinion that Mr. Cholmely was not there.

CHAPTER III.



FTER a short time Hicks appeared with tea, also with Caroline's buttered toast.

'Mrs. Grimshaw desired me to tell your lordship,' he said, when he had set these dainties down, 'that she hopes you will dine with her and your grandpapa to-night. They dine at seven, so the bell will ring an hour earlier; the dressin'-bell at half-past six.'

I am not sure that the prospect of this rare honour filled Catesby with delight; dinner in the west wing with his grandparents was not just the most cheerful feast he could imagine. Still, he knew how kind it was, and it would be better than being all alone. To Mrs. Grimshaw he liked talking well enough, but his poor old grandfather was so deaf, the boy could never make him hear, and *would* always keep confusing Catesby with his own son Ferdinand, who had died when he was about the same age—a boy of thirteen years or so.

'The books have come from Marlsford, my lord,' added the pale-faced Hicks. 'They was ready when you called this afternoon; but the boy was stupid, Mr. Nogal said, and could not find 'em; he was nervous-like.'

'He certainly *was* stupid,' assented Catesby readily. 'Have you brought them up?'

Luckily for Mr. Hicks's own character he had brought them up, and Catesby opened the packet eagerly.

They were some books he had got for Justin as a parting present, and it had added very much to his dissatisfaction that he had been unable to put them into his tutor's hands at Marlsford.

'They would have been so nice to read on the journey,' he had said regretfully. 'That was just why I persuaded you not to leave out "Middlemarch."'

However, here they were; and though late in time, were all Catesby could have wished.

'I will send them off to-morrow,' he said, when Hicks had left the room. 'I will write the note now while I have my tea.'

So getting a big flat book and blotting-paper, ink and pens, the boy began to write, cosily ensconced in his chair before the fire, and varying the business of composition with that of tea and buttered toast.

Now I hope you are not laughing very much at Catesby for missing his tutor a good deal, and feeling a little lonely the first afternoon that he was gone. I am a good deal older than Lord Catesby, and yet I miss people very much who go away and leave me after living with me familiarly for some time. And I have others left—I am not left alone.

But, you see, Justin had been poor Catesby's sole companion, and there was no one left but his grandparents and Mr. Hicks. And then,

Mr. Cholmely had not been Catesby's tutor and nothing else. He had not merely taught him Latin nouns, and told him little boys should be seen but never heard; he had not impressed him incessantly with the idea of what a shocking little prig he (Mr. Cholmely) had always been in his own young days, and how wonderfully clever and studious he had been (for, you see, Justin was not such an old fogey even then: only twenty-three or four, and his own 'young days' were hardly gone); he had been Catesby's playfellow and friend as well as tutor, and neither Mr. Hicks nor Mrs. Grimshaw were quite the same.

The latter would read aloud to him in a kind, inattentive voice; and the pale-faced footman would very gladly *bowl* (should rhyme with *owl*) for his lordship if his lordship wanted to play cricket with himself for a change; but Catesby was quite sharp enough to find out that reading his books aloud bored his kind grandmamma, and playing single-handed cricket most certainly bored *him*.

So it seems to me you should not think Catesby a bit of a baby for feeling lonely, and especially when I tell you he was not at all sentimental about his loss.

I don't think he was at all a greedy boy, but he liked buttered toast very much, and he did not enjoy it at all the less to-day, much less send it down untouched, because he was missing his tutor a good deal.

Well, as I told you, he was writing his note

now. Shall I tell you what he said? It was not much, which was so much the better; it was not very long, which was better still; and he did not use at all fine English, which was best of all.

This is his note :

‘ Hilgrave, Berkshire.

‘ MY DEAR MR. CHOLMELY,

‘ I miss you dreadfully ; so does Laddie. The books have come. Mr. Nogal’s boy says he was stupid-like ; exactly like, I said. I hope you will think the binding nice.

‘ Grandmamma has asked me to dinner in the west wing to-knight. I rather think of dressing ; then I should take her in, and Binns would take in grandpapa, who will certainly mistake him for Uncle Ferdinand.

‘ I am sitting in the schoolroom by the fire writing this on my lap—that’s why it goes up and down hill so ; if you were here you would make me go to the table and get cold and cross. Laddie is not so unplesant.

‘ Mrs. Bunce sent me up toast, to comfort me, I suppose, for your going away. Lots of butter ! I keep eating it between the sentences.

‘ I ecspect there are a good many words spelt wrong, but you can’t make me write them out ten times.

‘ The dressing-bell is ringing. Good-bye.

‘ Your affectionate freind,

‘ CATESBY.

‘ February 22 1869.’

It was rather an undertaking for Catesby to write a letter. He had got on a good deal quicker with English literature and the histories of ever so many nations than with writing or spelling. He was clever—and he had no objection to using his mind—but cleverness does not help one much to write copies, and it takes some years' habit of reading to teach a boy to spell.

However, the letter was written and sealed up without many mistakes, and with only a few blots and corrections.


Then the boy took up his lamp, and calling Laddie to follow him, went into his own room to get ready for dinner.

Meanwhile, in her big gloomy chamber in the west wing, Mrs. Grimshaw was wondering how she should amuse the boy all the evening.

She would have thought it most unkind to leave him all alone, but the duty of entertaining him lay very heavy upon her. It was long since she had had to do with children, and Catesby was not like an ordinary child; he was only thirteen, but then he was so prim and grave that the old lady could make nothing of him. Draughts he hated, and two could hardly play at the Royal Game of Goose, wherewith, quarter of a century ago, his uncle and his mother had beguiled the time with their young friends. So Mrs. Grimshaw was wondering what she should do, and still more what she should find to say.

Mrs. Grimshaw found it far more embarrassing to devise entertainment for her daughter's little son than in days gone by she had ever done to entertain the county.

CHAPTER IV.

‘ELL, Catesby,’ Mrs. Grimshaw said, when the dessert stage had been reached, and the servants were gone out, ‘how shall you get on without Mr. Cholmely?’

It was not the sort of question that boys generally find very easy to answer out of hand in one sentence, and Catesby did not attempt it.

‘You’ll miss him, won’t you, my dear? Of course you will,’ the old lady continued, ‘and you would find the Manor but a dull place for you—a dull place, I fear.’

This Catesby did not think of denying, so again his grandmother had to continue her remarks alone.

‘Mr. Cholmely had a talk with me, and we thought of all sorts of plans; but it is not easy to decide—very difficult to decide in your case, my dear, as Mr. Cholmely very truly said.’

Catesby smiled a little, secretly, at Mrs. Grimshaw’s reproduction of his tutor’s sayings. ‘I’m sure he did not shake his head like that,

and stick his lips out so,' the boy decided ; but he listened carefully, none the less, to what the lady had to say.

'You see, my dear, you are getting on—too old almost for a preparatory school.'

'I couldn't stand a preparatory school,' the boy put in abruptly. 'Spelling and Smith's Principia, ugh !'

Mrs. Grimshaw looked mildly startled.

'Exactly, my dear, that's what we meant ; the course of studies would not be equal to your capacity. And yet in some things you are backward—a little backward, are you *not*, my dear ?'

'I can't spell, and I loathe arithmetic—sums !' the boy assented cordially. 'For some things they'd stick me in the lower second, Mr. Cholmely says, while for others they'd want to let me be in the fourth or fifth form, at any public school.'

Again Mrs. Grimshaw was a little fluttered ; her grandson's English was so very nervous, and his manner so exceedingly decided, that the old lady's attention was quite distracted from the peeling of her orange, and twice during this conversation she swallowed the pips unwittingly.

'And so you see, Catesby, we thought it best not to send you to Stonycott or Oakhurst, where you would feel rather hopeless, perhaps ; and, besides, you are not strong, and want pampering a little, so there seemed nothing for it but a day-school.'

Catesby knew quite well what she was going to say, for he and Justin had talked it over together, and the latter would not have thought of recommending any plan for the boy's future which he himself would really have an objection to; however, Catesby waited patiently while the old lady endeavoured fruitlessly to recall another orange-pip that she had felt herself in the act of swallowing.

'We have thought of Harchester—your cousin Miles suggested it; and it has advantages—certainly it has advantages. It is a public school, and Mr. Cholmely seemed particularly to desire a public school education for you, and as a day-boy the evils on the other side would not affect you; and then it is so close to your cousin's that you might frequently spend Sunday with him, and it is most desirable that you should make the acquaintance of your relations.'

The old lady paused, and Catesby remarked simply that he liked the idea very much.

'Of course you would have to mix with Protestants a good deal,' Mrs. Grimshaw continued, 'but not altogether; there is rather a flourishing Mission at Harchester, and a good many nice Catholic families about, who would no doubt be attentive to you. I know the plan has disadvantages, but on the whole it seems the best we can decide on.'

'I suppose I should live in the town?'

'Yes, my dear; we thought of the priest at

first, but he did not desire the responsibility, especially as you are delicate and require a lady's care.'

Catesby made a face ; he was rather shy with ladies, and felt stupid in their company, and the idea of being under a lady's 'care' was particularly unpleasant. Visions of gruel, and feet in hot water, mustard poultices, and much overcoat and scarfing rose before his mind.

'And so,' continued his grandmother, 'it was decided you should board with M. Châlet, the senior French master, who has not a "house" like the other masters, but only one or two boys whose parents do not object to their sons living with a Catholic.'

'Are there any little Châlets?' asked Catesby.

'No, my dear ; M. Châlet has only two children : one is in the army, and the daughter is already married.'

Catesby was thoroughly glad of this ; he did not care to be *en famille* at school.

He had many other questions to ask, some of which poor Mrs. Grimshaw could not answer at all ; others were easy enough.

'When am I to go?' the boy inquired rather eagerly.

'It is February now ; we thought of letting you go after Easter. It comes so early this year that you will not have long to wait ; and meanwhile I have asked your cousin Miles to let you stay with him, as even with the boys

at school you would find it more agreeable than this place, should you not ?'

'I like being here very much,' the boy replied simply, 'and I do not mind being alone; but if you have already written to Miles it does not matter, and I shall no doubt find something to do there.'

CHAPTER V.

SO in a few days Catesby bade good-bye to Hilgrave for some time, and went to stay at Balcombe until Easter.

Mrs. Grimshaw had wished him to take the solemn Hicks with him, and M. Châlet had given a rather reluctant consent to the boy's bringing his own servant with him on the plea that otherwise he would be causing so much extra trouble; but Mr. Cholmely had laughed at this plan, and Catesby himself was utterly ashamed of it.

'Fancy going to school with your valet!' he exclaimed with supreme scorn. 'Why really, I wonder grandmamma does not ask you whether I should not take my Ayah. I'm sure she would be far more use than Hicks!'

Whereupon Mrs. Grimshaw relinquished a post and intrenched herself in a resolution

that Hicks should at least accompany the boy to Balcombe; and from this determination it proved very hard to move the nervous old lady. Moreover, Catesby had now to fight single-handed, for to Mr. Cholmely she had insisted on this, and it was only by the boy's own vehement expostulations that she could be induced to give in. Hicks also was quite on his mistress's side, for he rather liked the idea of the outing.

'Well, I must say, my lord,' argued the solemn footman, 'it's rather *strange-like*; you come with Ayah and three others, and now you want to go away all alone.'

'That was three years ago,' Catesby replied indignantly, 'and then I was coming from Mysore; surely there's some slight difference.'

Hicks supposed there was, but still was unconvinced—but not unconvinced that a week's holiday and change from the Manor would be particularly agreeable; unfortunately for him he would not avow his real desire, or most likely good-natured Catesby would have yielded. Instead, he had recourse to a fatal argument, which decided the boy's determination to go alone.

'Well, it does seem rather—rather *hodd* for your lordship to go by yourself like that; to have to look after your own luggidge and ticket and that.'

Catesby was determined.

'It's no use talking, Hicks; I'm going alone. And it's high time I knew how to look

after my luggage at my age. Do you suppose the other fellows at Harchester take a nurse with them to get their ticket and carry them when they're tired?—that *would* be *hodd* if you like,' he concluded, under his breath.

So, in spite of all the yearnings of Mr. Hicks after alien flesh-pots and a week's holiday, Catesby started on his travels alone.

The day was bright and cold, a keen March morning with a high wind and cheery sunshine; the old Manor looked pleasant enough in the morning light, as the boy drove away from it, little loth, to make his entry on the world; for that is really what going to school comes to, and most men will tell you that, looking back into their past life, it certainly stands out as the greatest, most distinct plunge they ever made.

Do not think poor little Catesby altogether heartless; he was honestly glad to be about to start on his own way, but he really was sorry to say good-bye to Hilgrave, dreary as the old place was. Mrs. Bunce knew he would not forget to come and say good-bye, and she was right. Indeed, there was hardly a person or thing which he did not go and look at for the last time; and even into the deaf ears of the old grandfather the child contrived to make some farewell reach. To Mrs. Grimshaw the boy's departure was, in spite of herself, a great relief: for three years she had been oppressed by her responsibility, and the burden had been trebled by Mr. Cholmely's going; and yet

even she felt that the little bit of young life would be missed from the still and solemn house of memories, and sighed to think of the deeper silence that would fall on garden, corridor, and bowling-green. At last the good-byes were all over ; the grandmother had gone back to her husband's chamber, where the old man was weeping feebly, weeping he scarce knew why ; and the little grandson, in thoughtful but not uncheerful silence, was being driven across the waste.

Of Catesby's going, and of the time he spent with his cousins, I will tell you nothing, or my little story would grow too long. So when I have told you of one of his last good-byes I will close this chapter, and we will follow him to school.

From his grandfather's darkened chamber Catesby, through long dim corridors, hastened to the chapel. Our Lord was not in the Tabernacle, so passing the High Altar the boy opened a small gate or wicket of wrought brass, and knelt down on the altar-step of an enclosed chapel or chantry. This was where Catesby said most of his prayers. Underneath him in her quiet grave his young mother lay, and above him, looking downward tenderly, his other Mother stood, she who is God's great Mother too.

When first he came to Hilgrave, in those first sad days, this had been the boy's favourite place. It was so shut in and secure from interruption, here he knew he could be alone

with the two he loved best. And here he was used to complain freely to them both. For the one and to the other he had prayed vehemently ; indeed, of late he had found himself praying to both, and he did not correct himself, for he knew well both heard him, and would help him all they could.

So this was his last good-bye.

‘Mother,’ the boy cried out loud (for there was none but God and her to hear)—‘mother, I am going away—I am going away to school. And you are not here to kiss me and bless me as I go. Other boys are not all alone like me ; they hardly think of what they have, because they have not lost it. And I, O mother, I miss you still. Shall I miss you like this always ? O mother, shall I never get used to being all alone ? Good-bye, good-bye. At school I can talk to you still, though I can’t come here. Pray for me that I may be always your own boy and remember all you taught me. . . . And you, my other Mother,’ the boy went on, looking upward—for he had been bending downwards, kissing the cold stone, and speaking through it to her whose body only lay beneath—‘oh, you who have been so good, so good, do not leave me motherless now. You see how I am going away, you know all the dangers and the difficulties there will be, and you know how bad and stupid I am. I shall be always in trouble, unless you help me still. You will, won’t you ? You will look after me still ? When I am homesick, and

think sadly about *her*, you will cheer me and make me braver, won't you? Do you hear? Are you listening? Remember how you felt when you lost Jesus. He was just about as old as me; and though He was God, you were terrified at His being all alone in that great Jerusalem. Be terrified about me now, and don't leave me alone for a minute. *Make* Him give me all I need. *I* don't know what I need, but you do. Get it for me. . . . Good-bye; I must go. I will kiss your feet, I will kiss your hands. You don't mind! It does not make you angry for me to touch you like this! Oh, I have to go; and yet I hate to leave you. *I won't* leave you—you must come too—I won't stir unless you promise to keep close to me all to-day, and all to-morrow, and all of every day until I die. Listen! listen! Do you hear?'

Then falling on his knees again, and lifting up his thin hands, white and childish yet, he was silent for a moment or two, and then he said his last, last farewell.

'Oh, you *have* been good to me always, you have, you have, all my life—in India, and here too! Oh, no wonder Jesus Christ longed for you through all the ages until He should be your Son! No wonder the Holy Ghost chose you! . . . O Mary, O Mother, Mother! oh, so sweet, so sweet! . . . Immaculate! Immaculate, God's Mother, God's Daughter! . . . His eldest, dearest Daughter, and His Spouse! I cannot think, I cannot pray: I can only laugh and "weep for mirth." . . . I must go

—come, you will come—we cannot stay any longer! You are coming too! . . . Oh, my own ever-living Mother!’

CHAPTER VI.



BIG bell had just ceased jangling loudly, and five hundred boys were hurrying out of school. The several schools opened into different playgrounds, more or less separated from each other. In one of these latter Catesby stood waiting for a friend to whom, on his coming last night, one of his cousins had introduced him.

Garstang did not seem to be as mindful of Catesby as the new boy was of him. But though Garstang did not immediately turn up, our friend was not long left in silence and alone.

Presently a boy of about his own age, or a little older, came up with his arm linked in that of a third fellow, older than either of them; and seeing Catesby's evident attitude of waiting, and noticing his impatient tapping of the ground with his foot, inquired blandly whether it was not a little unnecessary to beat time, there being apparently no music going on.

Catesby looked up, and replied quite gravely:

‘I am waiting for some one.’

His new friend affected great surprise, and inquired whether it might be himself whom Catesby was expecting.

‘No,’ Catesby answered; ‘but you’ll do to pass the time.’

The other reddened a little, and was rather confused—after all, bumptious people always show embarrassment most—and his companion laughed.

However, the bumptious one felt put upon his mettle, and obliged to stay now. He was a stout, stubby person, with a round not ill-natured face, and a good deal of swagger. He was rather spic-and-span in his attire, and if he could have managed it at Harchester, would have been ‘loud.’

‘Perhaps,’ he said, with a great air of ceremony, ‘it would be well to begin, even rather late in the day, with an introduction. My name is Vane. And yours?’

‘Catesby.’

‘Any Christian name? if I may make so bold.’

‘Oh yes,’ Catesby answered very matter-of-factly.

‘Any reasons against divulging it?’

‘None whatever.’

Mr. Vane’s companion was amused. He looked on, silent but appreciative, and left his sparrowy friend to stand alone.

‘Well, *will* you divulge it?’

‘Certainly, if it would amuse you to hear it.’

Catesby was most polite, but seemed rather bored, and made no great effort to conceal it. This particularly chafed Mr. Vane; he had meant the new boy to be flurried, shy, amused—anything, but not bored. Mr. Vane was not used to seeing his audience look politely patient. Still it is so much harder to bring a conversation of chaff and swagger to an end than it is to begin one, that he felt obliged to go on.

‘Divulge away, then,’ he said, just a little impatiently.

‘My Christian name is Robert,’ Catesby answered quite simply.

After so much prelude, a more self-conscious person would have felt rather awkward in making so insignificant a disclosure. But Catesby was utterly unself-conscious, and he merely seemed to be wondering more and more why Garstang did not come.

‘Robert Catesby! H’m! Any relation to the Gunpowder Plot?’ Vane inquired pertly.

‘Yes—great-great-great—about nine greats—grand-nephew.’

‘Whew!’ exclaimed Vane, with great affectation of alarm. ‘You’ll be blowing us all up one of these Novembers!’

Catesby laughed, rather provokingly, for he seemed to be doing so purely out of politeness.

‘At least you have seven months to take precautions in.’

Garstang had remembered the new boy at last, and was hurrying up about to break into apologies; but Vane prevented them.

‘I say, Garstang,’ he cried, while the latter was still a dozen yards or so away, ‘our latest acquisition is—what should you think?—a lineal descendant of the Gunpowder Plot!’

‘Not lineal—only collateral,’ commented Catesby mildly.

Vane’s first companion, whom he called ‘Fitz,’ laughed at this.

‘Just like you,’ he said, ‘inaccurate from the beginning.’

‘Allow me to introduce you,’ continued Vane, with a ceremonious bow, which prevented his seeing Garstang’s amusement—and even if he had seen it he would certainly have ascribed it solely to his own delicate humour.

‘Mr. Catesby—Mr. Garstang. Mr. Catesby—Mr. Fitz Maur,’ he concluded, with a wave of his hand and another bow.

‘Now let *me* introduce *you*,’ Garstang observed laughing. ‘Lord Catesby—Mr. Cocks-Vane. I think that is even more correct.’

The self-appointed master of ceremonies looked rather foolish; it is always embarrassing to find you have blundered in an office that you need not have undertaken.

‘I did not know you had met before,’ he said confusedly. ‘I apologise for usurping.’

‘*You had* met Catesby before, of course?’ Garstang inquired relentlessly. The repartee of the play-ground, you see, if not very scathing, is at least caustic enough.

‘I think,’ suggested Catesby quietly, ‘you have talked almost enough about me for the

present; if you go on much longer, Fitz Maur and I will have to begin discussing *you*.'

They all laughed and took the hint; and the four boys strolled off, chatting very amicably, in the direction of the Fives Courts.

CHAPTER VII.



ATESBY and *Poultry*, as Mr. Cocks-Vane was humorously nicknamed, became exceedingly good friends.

For the latter's worst fault was his bumptiousness, and Catesby always took him so quietly that it really was almost impossible for Vane to be very bumptious with him.

But Catesby was not equally lucky with everyone. His own fault got him into trouble very often; I mean his tendency to say rather provoking things in a calm, uninterested voice. He was never the aggressor, and even when using his wordy weapon on the defensive he was seldom betrayed into saying anything unworthy of a Catholic and a gentleman. But he often said what was more than school-boy self-restraint could put up with, and he often suffered for it.

Of course it very soon became noised abroad that the slim dark boy with the pale clever face was a 'Roman Catholic,' and hardly anyone was altogether unmoved by curiosity

concerning him; some were mischievously inquisitive, some harmlessly so, and a few rudely and coarsely. It was quite wonderful what slight excuses were deemed sufficient for broaching the topic; generally schoolboys are not theologically minded, but I think they considered Catesby's Catholicity rather a wonder of natural history than a matter of personal religion. I don't want to do an injustice to Harchester boys; and you must please understand that those who *knew* Catesby—even slightly—had too much good manners to allude directly to his religion; but out of five or six hundred boys there were necessarily many who only knew him as Lord Catesby, a descendant of one of the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot, and a Catholic. And they did not feel the same restraint. Grown-up people as well as boys are often a good deal less well-bred towards strangers than towards those who know them.

This kind of thing generally went no further than easy jokes, such as, 'Well, Gunpowder, how's the mine getting on?' or, 'You *don't* chance to be able to accommodate me with a dark-lantern, do you?' and the like, to which Catesby felt quite equal to retort with the utmost composure.

But, I suppose, in all large schools there will be a few boys who, as Vane drily put it, 'if their parents are gentlemen and ladies, they have no business to be.' And it was so at Harchester; for the most part these were big

stupid boys, too dull for a high form and far too old for the form in which their acquirements kept them, a scourge to their small companions and a disgrace to themselves. Catesby suffered many things from such as these: sometimes with patience, sometimes with outward coolness, indeed, but dangerous scornfulness, and sometimes with neither patience nor coolness.

Once, outside the Catholic Church, Catesby had given some small alms to a poor image-seller, an Italian, and, of course, a member of the boy's own religion; and, as ill-luck would have it, this poor fellow caught sight of the boy one morning, a few weeks later, through the railings that divided the Fives Court play-ground from the street. Immediately his face lighted up, and he went round to the gate, which stood wide open, and went in. There were a good many boys in the Fives Court, but only a few in the play-ground itself; of these, besides Catesby himself, one was a great idiot of a boy, sixteen years old by the dial, and nine or ten in intelligence, or lack of it.

This fellow was called Brain, with the fatal inappropriateness one often notices in such surnames as have a meaning; and, after five years at Harchester, had risen to the ripe dignity of an upper second-form boy. He was not quite so strong as he was stupid, but he was very strong, and he had long yearned to make Catesby feel the weight of his long ungainly

arms ; they had had several passages already, but only in verbal wise, and so Catesby had always come off victor. Now the time was come.

Catesby had not seen the image-seller, though the latter had seen him, and the poor man was, therefore, well within the playground gates before the boy noticed him. Brain, however, had been more observant, and with long swaggering strides was already on his way to where the man stood with his basket of angels, saints, madonnas and crucifixes.

Catesby did not want to seem over-eager, so, though he went at once now, the bigger boy was on the spot before him.

Just as he got up Brain was inquiring in a loud voice, evidently desirous of being overheard, what was the price of 'that thing of the Virgin Mary,' pointing to a moderately large statue of Our Lady—of the Immaculate Conception.

It chanced to be the only one left of the Blessed Virgin, except some small medallions, which would not suit Mr. Brain's purpose so well.

'Four shillings,' the Italian answered, rather suspiciously ; he did not like the boy's tone or manner, and would have been glad had he been able to refuse selling to him ; but this he could not do, and so he had hurriedly adopted the expedient of overcharging ; the statue was quite a common one of plain unpainted plastique, and would not have been cheap at two shillings. He felt sure no one

would give four for it. But Brain knew nothing of images, and even if he had would have been no less set on his point.

‘All right, give it me,’ he said at once, and yet with a drawling insolence.

The Italian prepared slowly to obey, with anything but a good grace, in spite of his profit.

‘I will give you half a sovereign for it,’ Catesby interrupted eagerly. The poor image-seller’s dark face lighted up, though he was not thinking of the money.

‘Unfortunately it is mine,’ Brain drawled out sneeringly. ‘You are a little too late.’

He had dropped the four shillings into the basket at once, and seeing the Italian in no hurry to give up the statue, was taking possession himself of it. Catesby knew he was right; the image was sold, and it could not be helped.

‘I should think it a great favour if you would allow me to have the statue,’ he said quietly, but a good deal too earnestly.

‘Ah, you are very good; I am not at all anxious to give you a present just now.’

‘I did not wish you to *give* it me,’ Catesby explained hastily, but Brain affected great offence at this.

‘You are really too good; I am not an image-seller just yet; perhaps I may come to that, but not just yet we will hope.’

‘You will come to something a good deal worse than that one of these days,’ Catesby had it on his tongue to say; but he kept it in,

and turning to the Italian, he merely asked him quietly to go away, slipping half a crown into his hand as he did so.

Brain was half inclined to prevent this, but thinking he had material for ample torture in his hands already, he changed his mind, and the Italian was suffered to depart in peace.

Catesby very wisely thought he too would go away, judging that if he were not present Brain would have no motive for profanity. But the bully had no idea of losing his prey.

‘Will you come and play Aunt Sally?’ he inquired carelessly, beginning to walk slowly away, and inviting half a dozen of his little satellites, whom he alternately tortured and patronized, to follow him.

‘What do you *mean*?’ said Catesby, paler than ever.

‘What I say. Will your lordship condescend to play so vulgar and Protestant a game as that commonly termed Aunt Sally?’ he drawled, bowing with a sneer of mock ceremony, and by a gesture indicating the image in his arms.

The little boys giggled; poor little wretches, bullying had a good deal demoralized them, and after all they hardly understood what they were about.

‘Thanks, I don’t care so very much for that intellectual diversion,’ Catesby answered, turning again to leave the play-ground for another, still thinking his best wisdom would be to go away.

He was just passing under the archway

leading out of the ground, when a shriek of laughter made him look round. Brain had driven three wickets into the ground, and on the top of these the image was perched; he was now sauntering slowly away, in order to get fifty yards from his mark, his back, of course, to Catesby.

If there was one thing Catesby could do it was run, and now he ran: like a slim black grey-hound he ran straight across the playground to where Brain's knot of urchins were standing round his mark, with half a dozen other boys, all eager to see what would come of it.

Brain had not a third of the distance to get over, but his back was turned, and Catesby was half-way there before one of the noble-hearted urchins piped out:

'He's coming, Brain!' and Brain turned angrily round.

And even now he would hardly stoop to run. To do so would look undignified, he thought; so oddly are our views of dignity and degradation confused even before we leave school. Besides, he could hardly credit that so small and weak a boy as Catesby would venture openly to defy him.

But he did not quite know his man. Several of Brain's fags or satellites were bigger than Catesby, but Catesby was not a Catholic gentleman for nothing, and it was not for nothing that he had learned to love Our Lady with a vehement, chivalrous ardour. His slim, black

form (for the child still wore mourning, of his own choice, after two years, for his double loss) sped across the ground, and before a full minute was passed he was standing breathless by the wicket.

Eagerly yet very, very tenderly he took the statue in his hands.

‘You are joking!’ he cried out. ‘You are not *really* going to—going to do that?’

‘Do what?’ drawled Brain, still a dozen yards away, slowly sauntering up.

‘What you said—play—that game—with this?’

‘Indeed! Don’t be so sure of that. Of course you know best, but now *I* thought I was going to—going to, play—that—game with that!’

He ended with a panting mockery of poor Catesby’s words. They were standing face to face now—not two yards apart—but Catesby was not any more afraid.

‘I will give it back to you,’ he said, trying to speak very calmly, ‘if you will promise on your honour to do no insult to it.’

‘Ah, how kind you are! But suppose I take it without giving any promise at all?’

Catesby looked stubborn, and said nothing.

‘Do you hear?’

‘You are not going to—to do that with it.’

The boy had an insuperable objection to joining the name of that game with the image of Heaven’s Queen.

‘I am going to play Aunt Sally with it. You

doubtless *worship* it. That, you see, is the difference between us.'

'Whether I worship it or no, you are *not* going to do what you say with it.'

Brain advanced a step nearer; Catesby retreated a pace. The big boy was in a fury; Catesby was undeniably angry. (And who can be prig enough to call it wrong in him? Surely, if there *is* a righteous anger his was so.)

'Why, I would do it with my own mother's statue if I had one of her here,' the bully growled, with a mocking laugh; perhaps to make himself seem less hopelessly in the wrong with the bystanders.

'If your brothers would stand by and see you play Aunt Sally with their mother's image—I am not going to stand by and see you do it with—God's Mother's.'

The boy spoke with all the roused-up fire of his calm, self-contained nature; and voice, attitude, glance—all spoke perfectly resolute defiance.

'Oh, my boy, we'll see about that!' Brain muttered furiously, making a dart forward.

'Yes, we will—we will—that we will!' Catesby retorted, starting away to one side, and taking to his heels at the pace of the wind.

They all broke into a run, and followed him, Brain rushing furiously forward: no one guessed at first what the smaller boy was going to do. He made straight for the railings, beyond which was the road, and beyond that again the river.

‘I can’t help it,’ he whispered vehemently as he ran—‘it is the only thing. Oh, my darling, darling Lady, you will not be angry with me for it! No, I know you will only love me better—be more and more kind to me—only you *can’t* be kinder than you have been all day.’

He had reached the railings. Two yards away from them he stopped, raised his right arm aloft, and flung the image with all his might over them, across the road, into the deep, swift river.

In a moment it had fallen—not with a great splash, for it was heavy and long of shape—and it was safe from the vulgar-minded fool who had wanted to insult the Mother of Him Who had made him.

Then Catesby, panting, out of breath and excited, caught hold of the railings and leant up against them.

Brain was upon him, and he knew what would come of it. He had counted the cost, and knew he would be cruelly punished; but he had not refused to risk it.

Now I will tell you plainly—he was *terrified*. He was most delicately made, physically and morally; his flesh was ever so tender; that which other boys would hardly feel—a little cold, a kick, a chance blow from ball or bat—hurt him almost unbearably; and like everyone whose imagination is over-vivid and intense, the thought of pain was agonizing to him—to hear of any other person’s pain was

torture to him. Passion sermons made him sick with horror; and even an animal's suffering made him suffer acutely himself if he had to witness it. Indeed, he had struggled against this softness, but all he could do was to learn to bear it; not one whit less did he feel or dread it.

I tell you he was now in an agony of fear, and therefore I think him a hundred times more brave. Had he cared little for pain, it seems to me there would have been less to wonder at in his doing that which he *knew* would entail certain suffering.

And he was not mistaken.

'You did, did you!' Brain shouted furiously—'you *did* throw away my property—my image—my Aunt Sally! We will see what care she will take of you—we will see how grateful she is to you for drowning her!'

'No, we will see,' his victim whispered to himself, 'what *I* can do to show *my* gratitude—what I can suffer for all the care she has had of me!'

And very soon he saw.

The great, stupid bully seized him by the shoulders, tore him from the protection of the railings, kicked him from shin to waist, cuffed him, shook him, threw him back against the low brick wall beneath the rails—blow after blow fell—oh, cruel, cruel, wicked, cruel strength! God's great gift abused!—the thin, frail boy's flesh shrank and quivered beneath each horrible blow—the blood, the sight of

which always sickened him, was pouring down his face from nose and mouth, and great agonized sobs were shaking his whole frame from head to foot.

But why, why did the bully suddenly stop ? —none of the cowardly, frightened little cravens around could or durst do anything —and certainly his fury did not fail with the exercise of his brutality—why did he have to cease and take off his hands ?

The Fives players had heard the noise, and had hurried across the ground, after a short delay, for each imagined some one else was going to the rescue ; and, after all, they did not know the rights of the case. But the wrongs were clear enough, and certainly it was wrong for a huge dolt to be showing his prowess on a thin, frail-built boy three years his junior.

Catesby certainly had suffered and shown his gratitude to Our Lady, and she had rescued him at last.

CHAPTER VIII.



ATESBY'S row with Brain did him no harm with his schoolfellows.

Harchester logic was quite worthy of a more advanced time of life ; and it was amusing to see that while many had been ready enough to sneer at the Catholic boy

for worshipping images and the Virgin Mary, before they could really know whether this were the case or no, all agreed in admiring him now that he had given unmistakable proof that he did worship the great Mother of God and did hold her image to be a sacred thing. But so it was. And now that it was certain it somehow ceased to appear absurd, and no one exclaimed against the wickedness or folly of holding in awful reverence and tender love her who is the Moon of the very Sun of Righteousness.

Now, if you expect me to give you an account of Brain's generous apology and subsequent conversion to the Catholic Faith, you will be disappointed. He never did apologize, and so far at least has shown no sign of any drawing towards the Mother and Mistress of Churches. Indeed, as I have determined to stick closely to Catesby in this story, I will not tell you of three conversions that really did come about at Harchester, and which had, I think, their first roots in that fight about Our Lady's image wherein Catesby bore himself so well.

Well, on that day she had watched over him carefully and brought much good to him and to others out of that cruel struggle—if struggle it could be called. But she did not fail him afterwards.

Harchester, I suppose, was no worse than other schools, but there was evil done there, and evil seeds were sown to bear a bitter fruit in after days : and of this Catesby soon became

aware. It came upon him very suddenly, in a careless talk between a group of boys he knew ; and it sickened him unutterably.

But he did the best thing ; he went straight to Our Lady, and with a sort of terror *entreated* her to take care of him.

‘Have a care of me,’ he said, quoting St. Philip’s lovely admonition of Our Lord, ‘or I shall do thee all manner of harm.’ ‘Keep thy hand upon my head, or I shall fall twenty times a day.’

And she had care of him all his school-days and kept him safe under the protection of her royal robe, so that he was still her faithful, trusty son.

Catesby was not at all a saint ; and he had no saint’s airs without the sanctity ; but he was a Catholic, and he was trying to be a good one, and his influence was felt among those he knew.

After that first day it was not often that anyone said in the boy’s presence what he would not have said in his mother’s. It was not that Catesby immediately began to preach or to pray, or to look like outraged piety ; but he *did* look scornful—scornful to a degree that was certainly telling, and on his pale thin face a most expressive flush gathered, and the meaning of the curling of his sensitive lips and of the sudden light in his dark eyes was unmistakable.

‘What a little devil it is !’ one of the eldest boys out of the five hundred remarked one day,

with a rather embarrassed laugh, as Catesby turned away on his heel from the group to which the said young gentleman had made a very questionable remark indeed.

‘He’d look just the same if it was the warden,’ asserted one of them.

There was a laugh.

‘I expect the warden would hardly have said what Hare did,’ remarked Vane drily, who always stuck up for Catesby even when he did not feel called upon altogether to imitate him.

‘They seem to be awfully particular—those Catholics,’ said another; ‘we have some nearer at home, and they always look thunderstruck if one says anything the least fishy.’

This odd phase of Catholic ethics having been discussed, Vane and Garstang followed Catesby, whom they joined in a stroll to the Fives Court.

‘I say, didn’t you take on rather at what Hare said?’ asked Garstang lightly.

‘I hated it, if that’s what you mean.’

‘But you looked so frightfully sneery; I don’t think he really meant anything.’

‘Meant anything! Good heavens, Garstang, what nonsense! He meant just exactly what he said, and what he said was disgusting . . . If he felt sat upon because I sneered I am glad of it—it is only a pity that somebody else did not sit upon him heavier . . . You don’t care for that sort of thing, or Vane either; I can’t think why you stand it.’

‘Poor Hare! He’s not at all a bad fellow,’ put in Vane good-naturedly.

‘You mean he’s not at all an *unpleasant* fellow,’ retorted Catesby, rather viciously; ‘I know he’s not, and that the mischief of him . . . what he may be in himself, I don’t know—I can’t make a “particular examen” of somebody else—but I do know that his talk is horrid and does ever such a lot of mischief. He’s a sort of hero, you know, and half of his followers talk like him: if a man chooses to put up a bad sign-post, I don’t see how he can object to your thinking things likely to be bad within. If his deeds are better than his words I’m glad of it, but there is certainly room for them to be so.’

This vehemence of Catesby’s produced its effect: and others who before had done nothing were emboldened to make a firmer stand after his example.

CHAPTER IX.



GARSTANG was rather a special friend of Catesby’s. They got on very well because they were very different; Garstang was a year or two older by the clock and that was all the better, for boys of his own age were a little young for our precocious friend. Garstang’s people were exceedingly poor, and the boy himself made no

attempt to hide the real reason why he kept out of a good deal of the Harchester fun, which often involved a certain amount of expenditure. Like most poor gentlemen, Garstang was inordinately proud—I don't mean vulgarly proud of his birth or anything of that sort; but he had a sort of innate feeling that to one in his position many things were temptations which must carefully be watched against; he lived with others of his own class, but who for the most part had the power of indulging a good many tastes that he had to restrain, and he had a constant horror of falling into any meanness resulting from a desire to do all that others did. Of course all this was rather self-conscious, and, as I said, no one was ever less self-conscious than Catesby; but instead of looking down on Garstang for this he merely felt a great deal for him, and was more careful in what he said and did not to hurt any over-fine sensibility. Garstang had been introduced to Catesby at once and been asked to look after him, and this he did; but as soon as Catesby had made other friends he himself retired: this again was part of his odd self-consciousness.

'I will do all I can for him,' he thought, 'but he shall not feel bound to stick to me because he knew me first.'

I will say that in all this there was no thought of Catesby's rank or any folly of that kind: I expect Garstang felt himself quite equal in that respect to the new-comer, though he had no coronet, and he was far too careless of general

opinion to shun anyone for fear of tuft-hunting accusations. He merely left Catesby alone. But Catesby, for his part, did not want to be left alone; he had taken a liking to Garstang, and wanted to know him better. And in a little while they were real friends.

Catesby inoculated the elder boy with some of his tastes, and in turn caught some ways and habits from him.

‘Have you any politics?’ Catesby asked one day, when he came into Garstang’s room and found him absorbed in a ‘leader.’ ‘Newspapers always bore me so.’

Garstang looked up and laughed.

‘*Must* one have politics to read the newspapers? . . . Yes, I suppose I have some politics . . . my people are all Tories.’

Catesby went to the window and sat down on the sill with his back to his friend, and looked out into the meads.

‘You said that as if that were the conclusion of the whole matter,’ he said over his shoulder, with a queer little smile.

‘So it is . . . I have no idea of . . . I mean, I like a family to have a traditional policy; I hate a family to be one generation Whig, next Tory, and so on—don’t you?’

‘It would not make me very unhappy . . . I have no “people,” you see.’

‘Oh, bosh! you have Mr. Grimshaw, your grandfather!’

Catesby laughed aloud.

‘Certainly I have him, but it would not be

very easy to arrive at his views now . . . I expect if you were to talk to him about the Prime Minister he would imagine you were alluding to Lord Melbourne . . . I grant his opinion would be worth having on emancipation.'

Garstang looked shocked.

'You are horribly flippant, Catesby; it's disgusting to hear you talk like that of your grandfather . . . Awfully bad form, really. I wish you would not.'

'All right! but you have never talked to him—at him I mean—I have, you see, and there's the difference . . . Come out and put away that paper, do!'

So they went out along the meads for a walk to Balcombe.

'So you've got no politics,' Garstang remarked meditatively, when they had reached the river-banks.

'Not that I know of . . . Miles, my cousin, says I am a Radical,' Catesby answered mischievously.

'Heaven forbid! A Robert Catesby a Radical, it would be monstrous!' exclaimed Garstang, with pious horror.

'Do you think the conspirator but a typical Tory?' asked Catesby innocently; 'I should have thought that mode of exalting the King and Lords rather revolutionary.'

'Tiresome you are! I mean—oh, it is such a contradiction!'

'What is?'

'Oh, the whole thing—why you are a sort

of person out of a book: a Catholic, of an old county family, prescribed too—perfect! And then under attainder—oh, it is all so archaic, so anti-modern, anti-Birmingham . . . Who can think of tall chimneys and bills of attainder in one breath?

Catesby's grim smile deepened.

'You say I ought to be a Tory for three reasons: 1. Because my most famous ancestor tried to blow up the King, the Lords, and the Commons—the whole Constitution, in fact; 2. Then because my family was persecuted by some eight or nine subsequent Kings and Queens; 3. Then because we have always belonged to a religion that this country and its rulers have tried to stamp out and trample on—I can't follow you quite.'

Garstang laughed.

'Oh, you know what I mean! . . . You're no Radical, I'm sure.'

'I never said I was . . . my *cousin* said so, not I . . . I am a Catholic.'

For a minute or two they said no more. Then Garstang asked abruptly:

'Are you bigoted?'

'That depends on what you mean.'

'Oh, do you look down on other religions?'

'Utterly.'

Garstang looked disgusted.

'I don't . . . *we* don't . . . look down on your religion.'

'That is very good of you,' Catesby drily answered.

‘What is there to look down upon in—in *my* religion for instance?’

‘What *is* your religion?’ Catesby asked innocently.

Garstang reddened slightly.

‘The Establishment, of course—the Church of England.’

‘As by law established,’ Catesby murmured, half under his breath; ‘the Queen and the Lords spiritual, etc.; what is there to look *up* to in it?’

‘The Queen! don’t you look up to her?’ inquired loyal Garstang, with horror.

‘Of course, it is part of our religion; but not as connected with my Church. High Priestesses are unknown among us . . . No, I don’t look up to that a bit; only that is not your religion really—your *own* religion I do respect, but it has not anything to say to the Establishment.’

Garstang was puzzled.

‘I mean this. You have a sort of odd implicit religion of your own; it’s very queer, I know, a kind of *pot-pourri* made up out of things taught you by your mother, of things you have read in the Bible, or things heard in sermons . . . it makes you say your prayers when you do say them, and makes you think a lot of things wrong . . . I expect that’s about all.’

‘Well!’

‘Well,’ said Catesby quietly, ‘I believe in a *Church*: you don’t know what that means . . .

and as there really is only one, it naturally looks down on the home-brewed, make-shift little religions such as people outside it put up with.'

'All I can say is then, it's like its impudence,' said Garstang hotly.

Catesby laughed and said nothing.

'It can't afford to be over-particular . . . there are holes enough in its clothes, I fancy.'

Catesby replied by an inarticulate sound that I can't represent on paper—a sort of isolated note of interrogation.

'At all events we don't worship the Virgin,' Garstang remarked witheringly.

'Certainly you do not,' Catesby assented readily and with unruffled good temper.

'But *you* do.'

'Exactly . . . what a clear way you have of putting things! We worship Our Lady, and you don't. You don't worship God's Mother, and we do.'

Garstang looked utterly bewildered. All he had felt confident of doing was of proving his point, but his 'party in convent' had rendered proof useless.

'Well, you *must* be poor creatures then,' was all he could advance in continuation of his argument.

'Really. But why now?'

'It's idolatry. Only savages are idolaters.'

'Certainly . . . (well, no; some other people too), but then to worship Our Lady is not idolatry . . . I always thought to adore images

as God was idolatry. Do you consider Our Lady an image ?

‘ But you worship her image.’

‘ Yes, of course, but not as God ; I expect you have been using a word a good long while, and doing all sorts of mischief with it without knowing what it means. What does worship mean ?’

‘ To adore, of course.’

‘ Of course, *not* to adore. It means to venerate, to reverence in a high degree. You worship your mother, and every Englishman who marries promises to worship his wife.’

A five-barred gate here interrupted the argument ; when it was surmounted,

‘ Oh, that’s in a different sense !’ said Garstang.

‘ Different sense from what ?’

‘ When we talk of worshipping our wives, we don’t mean the same sort of thing at all.’

‘ Nor do we when we speak of worshipping Our Lady.’

‘ Do you mean to say that you worship her only as a man “ worships ” his wife ?’

‘ No, they are all three different. When we talk of worshipping God, we mean that we adore Him *as God* ; we worship Our Lady as God’s Mother—the greatest thing in all His creation ; when an Englishman promises to worship his wife, he means that he will love her a good deal—if he doesn’t take to beating her.’

Catesby ended with a laugh, and Garstang laughed too.

‘Do you really mean all that?’

‘Certainly!’

‘But surely you *do* practically honour her too much?’

‘That would be quite impossible.’

Garstang looked up sharply.

‘Good heavens, Catesby, what blasphemy!’

‘But why?’ asked Catesby, quite unmoved.

‘It’s—oh, it’s making a God of her.’

‘Not in the least: Catholics are not idiots, they know that Mary is not God and could not possibly become so, but she *is* His Mother: and so, not being at all afraid of some day toppling over into “Mariolatry,” they know they can’t possibly love and honour her too much. If we worshipped her more at Harchester it would be a very different place.’

CHAPTER X.

IN the main Catesby was very happy in his quiet way at Harchester, but he was not glad that he had ever come there. He could not help seeing that the plan was a mistake. A Catholic boy, even as a day boy, at a Protestant school was a strange anomaly; and he knew that the whole thing was full of danger.

Very few boys could have been, even in his position, safe from many kinds of mischief. When the whole tone of a place is Protestant,

a Catholic cannot breathe very freely, and while at Harchester there was very little religiousness of any sort, what there was would not help a Catholic much.

‘Garstang, I expect you won’t see me here after midsummer,’ Catesby remarked one day to his friend, as they were strolling along the meads of the river.

Garstang looked very much surprised.

‘But why? You get on so well. Isn’t it a great pity to change about?’

‘Yes, generally; but I would rather be with my own people—with other Catholics. Can’t you understand it?’

To tell the truth, Garstang could not. His own attachment to the State Church would not render him very unhappy if he were deprived of its aids.

‘Well, of course I shall be very sorry. All our lot will miss you dreadfully.’

‘Will you come to stay with me this summer? I am going to my *own* home—for the first time in my life. I have never seen it yet; and Mills and his children are coming too. You know them all, and it would be a change.’

Garstang liked the idea immensely, and agreed most readily.

‘Is it a pretty place?’ he asked with interest.

‘I believe so; but no one has lived there since my grandfather died, and I should think it is rather mouldy by now. There is a “chase”—sort of park, you know—and a

river ; so we could ride and boat, at all events.'

Old Mrs. Grimshaw was rather upset when she heard from Catesby that he thought it best not to go on at Harchester ; and it took many letters to persuade her that her grandson could ever stand the roughness of one of the great Catholic schools. But in the end she gave in, as Catesby always intended she should, and the more readily that Mr. Cholmely wrote to commend his old pupil's decision, and saying that the reasons Catesby had given quite convinced him that the Harchester experiment was not worth carrying out.

That Catesby should spend the greater part of his vacation at Catesby Abbots, only coming to Hilgrave for ten days, was rather a relief to the old lady, and she very readily complied with his request that she should write to his cousin Miles, formally inviting him and his wife to go as host and hostess to her grandson's home, to take care of him for the holidays.

Of course, leaving Harchester was in many ways rather sad work. Catesby had made many friends there ; and he always clung to the friends he did make. It had been more like home to him than any place he had lived in since leaving India ; and the life suited his natural tastes very well.

But he knew the change was necessary, and he made it without grudging. It certainly cost him a pang to say good-bye to the meads

and the river, the 'Fives Courts,' and the venerable cloisters and quadrangles of the beautiful old place; his rooms had been so pleasant—they were already so full of happy memories—that to know they would be his no longer made Catesby feel quite regretful; but he was full of hope for the new life, and would not let himself cast all his looks backward, however his thoughts might cling to what was past.

'How we shall all miss coming here!' Garstang said dolefully, as he watched his friend taking down his pictures and books one by one and packing them away. 'We had such gorgeous fun here sometimes. Vane will be disconsolate, and all our lot; it was our club.'

But though there was much to make Catesby feel thoughtful and grave in saying good-bye to Harchester, there was nothing to fill him with bitterness or unavailing regret. Our Lady had done her part; she had kept her son safe; and he had done his, serving Jesus Christ and her with chivalrous love and manly purpose.

And he was full of gratitude. With quiet joy he knelt before her image, and gave her thanks.

Very often during these months Catesby had knelt there, in the little Lady Chapel of the Catholic Church, and oftenest in the sweet gladness of the summer afternoon; he had often given up a little pleasure for this, and it

had gained for him greater love and tenderness and trust towards her who is the best Mother of us all.

Even now the July sun was streaming in through the open windows on to the cool stone floor. Outside, the happy fields lay laughing in the sun, and the birds made melody to God. All was here so still, so still: no one in the church but Jesus Christ and him; and no one to hear the boy's whispered thanks but God and God's Mother. It was so pleasant there, in the quiet of that holy place one would have liked to kneel still in reverie and say no word; to be at ease in soft half-dreamy memory and thought and contemplation, watching the small red light before Our Lord, with the incense-fragrance in one's nostrils that clings ever round the walls and draperies of Catholic churches.

'*Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine!*
O Lord, how very pleasant are Thy temples!
How blessed are they that dwell in Thy house. . . .

But Catesby had come to say good-bye, and how could he go away having said nothing?

'I am come to thank you,' he whispered, looking up to where she stood with her Son, God, upon her breast; 'but I don't know what to say. I can only say "Thank you," after all, over and over again. Oh, you have been good to me; I asked you to watch over me and hold my hand, and you have done more. You have filled my hands with gifts,

and have taught me what I could never have found out myself. . . . I am so stupid, and you have not let me blunder. Oh, do not give me up now; do not let me give you up: I only love you such a little, and Jesus Christ loved you so much:

“ And oh, how can we love thy Son,
Sweet Mother, if we love not thee?”

Long ago there were brave soldiers who fell in love with you and Jesus Christ, and they did nothing at all then but fight for you both. Teach me what you taught them. Teach me to do something for you; you are always doing things for me. Oh, my dear, listen to me, I have something to say. You see I am going away, but I am only one out of all these hundreds here; do watch over them too, and draw them to your knees. What can I do? Nothing at all, but pray, and pray, and pray; at least make me do that, and make me go on doing it ever so persistently. But you can do just what you like. And you *do* like this. You do like helping boys to be good and true and pure; and you do long for them all in their own places to do what God wants them. You know what St. Hugh meant this place to be when he built it! and you know what it is! O Mary, I am ashamed of it; poor St. Hugh, do help him to get back his school; he was ever so loving to you. . . . And then, as to me: I am beginning again—help me to begin well. It is

harder to begin again than to begin at first ; so you must help me more still ; will you ? And let me be like St. Francis. Oh, let me say to myself, now that I am going away to start on a fresh life in a strange place, let me say like him : " Now let us begin to love Jesus Christ a little." Even he did not dare ask more than that—" a little ;" and yet *how* he loved Jesus Christ ! To you I dare not say, " Jesus Deus meus, super omnia amo te ;" but oh, I should like to. Help me to learn to love. I must go, but I will not leave you behind ; come and walk beside me, and lay your hand upon my head. I bow down to the ground in honour of your majesty ; bring me always to your feet in all I do and it will be done well.'

For a little while he bent down very low in silence, to receive the blessing of our Queen ; and there shall we leave him ?

Where better ? I will tell you only that he does well. In his new life, among new friends and in new places, he has been faithful and true to Our Lady's love, and she has been faithful and true to him.

To be a good and noble boy she has taught him, and she will teach him to be a good and noble man.

Teach us also, O great Mother, however slow we are to learn.

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